



Washington State Department of Agriculture News Release

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Tukwila trees inspected for signs of citrus longhorned beetle

OLYMPIA – The state Department of Agriculture has started to inspect trees in Tukwila for signs of citrus longhorned beetle activity. The inspections started near the site where three beetles were captured last August and entomologists found evidence that five other beetles escaped. A serious pest in Asia, the citrus longhorned beetle attacks 40 different species of trees.

To stop the beetle, the Department of Agriculture last November established a plant quarantine of all properties lying primarily within ½-mile of the intersection of Macadam Road South and S. 144th St. Now, state entomologists want to find out if trees in the quarantine area have been infested.

Staff from the Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Forest Service will inspect trees using ground and canopy survey techniques. Ground surveys involve tree inspections from ground level and canopy surveys include tree climbing. If the height or density of a tree makes it impossible to survey a tree from the ground, or the tree cannot safely support the weight of the surveyor, a bucket truck may be used.

For the next two months, the inspectors will look for niches chewed in the bark by the female beetle before laying eggs, coarse sawdust created when grubs bore into the interior of trees, sap oozing from niches as grubs feed inside trees, and feeding damage on branches.

During another round of inspections later in the year, they will also look for beetles and emergence holes made when beetles chew their way out of the trees.

“Our goal is to locate and eradicate the beetle in Tukwila before it can establish itself and spread to other parts of the state,” said Chad Phillips, a project entomologist at Department of Agriculture. “Ideally, we will inspect every tree in the quarantine area every year for five years to ensure that the beetle has not become established in the area.”

Inspectors will carry appropriate identification and be able to provide names, and phone numbers of supervisors in Olympia. They will ask permission from residents before they enter properties. If residents aren't home, they will leave information at the front door and conduct the survey at a later date.

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The citrus longhorned beetle is a close relative of the Asian longhorned beetle that has caused more than 7,000 trees to be cut down and destroyed in New York City and Chicago. More than \$126 million has been spent to date to eradicate the beetle in those cities. The cost is expected to rise to \$369 million by 2009.

The citrus longhorned beetle was detected very early in Tukwila, compared to the five or six years that entomologists believe the Asian longhorned beetle was present before it was detected in New York City and Chicago. Consequently, Washington officials are optimistic that they can eradicate the beetle in Tukwila without the massive loss of trees and other costs experienced by those cities.

For more information, call the Department of Agriculture at (800) 443-6684, send e-mail to PestProgram@agr.wa.gov, or visit the department's Web site at agr.wa.gov/CitrusLHBeetle.htm.

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